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IN EDUCATION

# **INSPECTION OF HAVERING LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY**

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**OFFICE OF HER MAJESTY'S CHIEF INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS  
in conjunction with the  
AUDIT COMMISSION**

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## **APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

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## INTRODUCTION

1. This inspection was carried out by OFSTED in conjunction with the Audit Commission under Section 38 of the Education Act 1997. The inspection used the *Framework for the Inspection of Local Education Authorities (July 1999)* which focuses on the effectiveness of the local education authority (LEA) work to support school improvement. The inspection also took account of the Local Government Act 1999, insofar as it relates to work undertaken by the LEA on Best Value.
2. The inspection was based partly on data, some of which were provided by the LEA, on school inspection information and audit reports, on documentation and discussion with LEA members and staff and representatives of the LEA's partners. In addition, a questionnaire seeking views on aspects of the LEA's work was circulated to all 88 schools. The response rate was 85 per cent.
3. The inspection involved studies of the effectiveness of particular aspects of the LEA's work through visits to one infant school, two junior schools, nine combined schools and six secondary schools. During the visits, inspectors tested the views of governors, headteachers and other staff on key aspects of the LEA's strategy. The visits considered whether support provided by the LEA contributes, where appropriate, to the discharge of statutory duties, is effective in contributing to improvements in the school and provides value for money. Evidence from other Her Majesty's Inspectors visits to schools within the LEA was also considered.

## COMMENTARY

4. Havering is an affluent borough, with some pockets of multiple deprivation, on the eastern edge of London. It is a mixture of leafy suburb and green belt land within which large post-war municipal housing estates were built to accommodate populations transferring from inner London. Its schools perform better than national averages. Results at GCSE level are particularly good. A relatively high proportion of three and four year-olds are on the roll of its schools and 75 per cent of the LEA's secondary pupils go on to some form of post-16 education.

5. Over the course of the past three years, the LEA has had to build the capacity to support its strategy for school improvement. The LEA's support for school improvement has itself improved and shows some strengths. Nevertheless, there are weaknesses in the LEA's approach to monitoring and challenge in schools and in the planning for school improvement in the Education Development Plan (EDP). Aspects of monitoring lack sufficient rigour and schools are not always clear when the LEA has concerns. Challenge for schools in the setting of targets is inconsistent and attainment targets for effective schools are undemanding. There is, however, every prospect of improvement in these areas. Support for those schools that have been identified by the LEA as causing concern, and by OFSTED as requiring special measures and having serious weaknesses, is satisfactory and is leading to improvement.

6. Support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and for their inclusion in schools is exceptionally strong with numerous examples of good practice. The LEA has a clear strategy, effectively meets its statutory duties and provision for schools ensures that pupils make good progress. The LEA provides very good behaviour support. While there are weaknesses in support for children in public care, and in the measures the LEA takes to combat racism, both are improving.

7. The LEA discharges the vast majority of its functions to support school improvement satisfactorily. The considerable strengths outweigh some weaknesses in key areas. Particular strengths are found in:

- support for information and communication technology in the curriculum;
- meeting its statutory obligations for of pupils with SEN;
- exercising its SEN functions in a way which supports school improvement;
- exercising its SEN functions in a way which provides value for money;
- support for behaviour in schools;
- support for early years;
- relationships with schools;
- partnership with external agencies; and
- aspects of measures to combat social exclusion.

8. The weaknesses lie in:

- the EDP and its implementation;
- the extent to which the LEA has in place structures for achieving Best Value;
- the LEA's approach to monitoring and challenging schools;
- support for governors;

- property services;
- support for children in public care; and
- measures to combat racism.

9. The council is committed to school improvement and is rightly proud of the performance of its schools. Education budgets have been protected as far as is practicable. A policy of very high delegation supports school autonomy and has ensured direct school funding has been maximised. There are effective consultation procedures to support positive LEA/school relations. The council has an appropriate long-term vision for the role of the council and for councillors around community empowerment and leadership. Overall, it has made a good start on reconfiguring both council and officer structures and corporate planning processes to achieve this vision. The modernised council structure put in place has streamlined decision-making. Service planning in education is satisfactory. The council is making rapid progress in developing performance management systems and embedding a business management culture, although there remain some weaknesses. Under the new structure scrutiny by elected members of the quality of service provision for education is limited.

10. Education is well led by the new executive director for children and lifelong learning and his senior management team. There is a shared and clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of LEA's services. Partnership with schools is developing and there is clear evidence that strategic planning for school improvement and Best Value is improving. There is a considerable amount still to do but the inspection team believes that the LEA has the capacity to act positively on the recommendations of this report.

## **SECTION 1: THE LEA STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

### **Context**

11. Havering is a relatively affluent borough on the eastern edge of London created in 1965 as a result of the merger of the former Romford Borough and Hornchurch Urban District councils, which had very separate identities. It is a mixture of leafy suburb and green belt land within which large post-war municipal housing estates were built to accommodate populations transferring from inner London. Havering has pockets of multiple deprivation largely, but not exclusively, within its large post-war ex-Greater London council estates where youth unemployment is significantly above national averages. The total population is about 230,000.

12. In January 2000, there were 21,179 primary and 15,362 secondary pupils in Havering schools. In May 2000, over three-quarters of three and four-year-olds were on the roll of Havering's maintained schools. In 2000, 75 per cent of Havering's year 11 leavers stayed in some form of post-16 education, which is above the national average. Of the primary pupil population, 1.7 per cent have a statement of special educational needs, which is in line with the national average, while 2.8 per cent of secondary pupils have a statement, which is below the national average. A much smaller proportion of pupils are of ethnic minority heritage than found nationally, (LEA: 3.8 per cent; national 12.1 per cent). The proportion of pupils in both its primary and secondary schools eligible for free school meals is below national averages (LEA: 13.2 per cent and 12.3 per cent; national 19.7 per cent and 17.6 per cent, respectively).

13. The LEA maintains 67 infant, junior or combined primary schools with thirteen nursery classes, eighteen secondary schools (of which two are foundation) and three special schools. Four of the secondary schools are single sex (two boys and two girls). Only five of the secondary schools have sixth forms, a large sixth form college and a college of further education provide post-16 education for the majority of pupils. In addition to the special schools, a specialist facility is attached to a secondary school and four are attached to primary schools. There are four Beacon schools: three primary and one secondary. Two secondary schools have been successful in applying for specialist school status. Primary rolls are expected to decline by about 300 pupils per year over the next five years. Slowly rising secondary rolls are expected to peak in 2004. There is a net inward movement of pupils from neighbouring boroughs at age 11.

### **Performance**

14. The performance of Havering schools is better than national averages and is generally above that of statistical neighbours<sup>1</sup> at all key stages. Results at Key Stage 4 are particularly good. The proportion of primary schools judged to be good or very good at their last OFSTED inspection was well above the average nationally and for statistical neighbours. The proportion of secondary schools judged to be

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<sup>1</sup> The statistical neighbours for Havering are Bexley, Dudley, St Helens, Wigan, Bury, Enfield, Southend on Sea, Stockport, Bolton and Sefton.

good or very good was broadly in line with the average nationally and for statistical neighbours.

15. The LEA's data on pupils entering Havering primary schools indicates that attainment is broadly in line with the average for statistical neighbours and nationally. Attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics is higher than national averages and similar to that for pupils of statistical neighbours. Attainment in both subjects at Key Stage 2 is rising in line with the national rate. A higher proportion of Havering pupils achieve five or more A\* – C grade GCSE passes than nationally or the average for statistical neighbours and the rate of improvement is well above that found nationally. The proportion achieving at least one A\* - G grade is in line with national averages. The average points score at advanced level for Havering pupils is higher than the national and statistical neighbour average and improving at a much faster rate. Progress between Key Stage 1 and 2 and Key Stages 3 and 4 is above national averages and that between Key Stage 2 and 3 is in line with the national average.

16. For both primary and secondary schools the level of attendance is in line with national averages. Levels of exclusion in secondary schools are similar to the national average whilst in primary schools it is well below.

## **Funding**

17. Havering's education standard spending assessment (SSA) per school-age pupil for 2001/2002 was two per cent above the national average, but eight per cent below the average for outer London. Despite its commitment to protecting education budgets in recent years the council has consistently spent between one and two percent below SSA on education. However, all the increase in SSA for 2000/01 and 2001/02 was passed to schools in line with the Government's expectations.

18. Planned expenditure per primary pupil in 2000/01 was below the outer London and national averages (£2375 per pupil compared with £2644 for outer London and £2484 nationally). However, expenditure per secondary pupil was closer to both outer London and national averages (£3275 per pupil compared with £3318 for outer London and £3141 nationally). Havering met the Government's target for the increase in delegated funds per pupil in 2000/01 and in 2001/02. The level of delegation in 2000/01 at 87.1 per cent was high – the second highest in London (average 84.1 per cent) and the fifth highest nationally (average 84.2 per cent). In 2001/02 delegation increased further to 90.6 per cent, the highest figure nationally.

19. Planned expenditure of £50 per pupil on central administration in 2000/01 was below the average for outer London (£58) and broadly in line with the national average (£50). In 2001/02 the amount was reduced further to £45 per pupil, well within the Government's limit of £70 per pupil for LEAs in London. In 2000/01 Havering received well below the average of comparator LEAs for the amount per pupil of Standards Fund and other specific grants. Funds retained centrally for school improvement including implementation of the EDP, were low (in 2000/01 £19 per pupil compared with £34 per pupil for outer London and £26 per pupil nationally). Expenditure on independent special school fees is low, and the cost of home-school transport per pupil is about half that of comparator LEAs.



20. Capital grants have increased over the last four years, and further much-needed capital investment in schools is planned for the next three years. The low level of deprivation means that Havering fails to qualify for significant regeneration or European funds, although the LEA has a substantial Sure Start project. A Public Private Partnership scheme to provide energy and water savings at three secondary schools is at the specification stage.

### **Council structure**

21. The council is run by a minority Labour administration. Since 1998, council structures have been reorganised to establish a partnership cabinet including all but one of the main parties. The leader of the minority Labour administration leads this cabinet with members being allocated specific areas of responsibility in line with the themes included in the community strategy. One of these themes is lifelong learning. The cabinet considers reports early and often in draft form to establish and clarify the policy and direction of proposals. These reports are then completed and sent through to strategy committee for approval. There are three oversight and scrutiny committees, one of which is learning and enterprise. These committees review and scrutinise cabinet and strategy committee decisions and investigate in their own right. The other key role of members is as a representative for their community through community area forums.

22. The implementation of the new structures has been well planned and supported. Members have been fully involved in the development process and have received training in the role of scrutiny and strategy development. Decision-making is, as far as possible, devolved to officers and this leads to short manageable agendas supported by clear systems for recording delegated decisions. Officer and member relationships are governed by clear protocols. There is clear evidence that the partnership cabinet has already established a high degree of consensus on council policy. However, while the scrutiny committees are properly constituted they are at an early stage of development.

23. The officer structure is clear and logical and supports service co-ordination. The executive director is the chief education officer and has overall line management responsibility for three heads of service within the children and lifelong learning service cluster, that is, strategy and resources; school and student services and learning and achievement.

### **The Education Development Plan**

24. The Education Development Plan (EDP) is based on an accurate and detailed audit of local needs and reflects national priorities. Nevertheless, weaknesses in the articulation of actions and definition of success criteria for its activities mean that it is an unsatisfactory document. Monitoring has not been sufficiently rigorous to allow adequate evaluation of progress. However, the LEA has recognised and is addressing these deficiencies.

25. The targets for Key Stage 2 and 4, based on 1998 performance, were all challenging. Nevertheless, the performance of pupils at Key Stage 4 has exceeded

expectations. In the 2000 results, the proportion of pupils with five or more A\* to C GCSE grades and the average points score exceeded the LEA target for 2001. The LEA is proposing to increase these targets in the next revision of the EDP. In contrast, the targets for Key Stage 2 remain challenging. In particular, in 2000 performance in English was two percent below LEA target, and the aggregate school targets in English are still some five per cent below the LEA target.

26. The EDP priorities are clear and are satisfactorily linked to the findings of the audit. The literacy and numeracy priorities focus on the gap between performance and targets but also identify the 'local issues' that exist in Havering schools. The linkages between the EDP and national priorities are clearly set out. There is, however, little reference to the LEA's corporate priorities. A sensible programme of activities supports each priority. However, many of the activities are insufficiently precise and they overlap. For example; activities relating to strengthening curriculum planning and leadership in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and those relating to improving the effectiveness of leadership and management and the quality of teaching. Consultation processes are well laid out in the plan but the evidence from the school survey, confirmed during school visits, indicates an ambivalence within both primary and secondary schools towards the EDP with a quarter of schools in both phases rating the relevance of its priorities as less than satisfactory.

27. The degree to which the set of actions set out under each activity provides a coherent pattern of support to schools is uneven and therefore unsatisfactory. There is insufficient attention given to how resources are to be targeted and it is unclear how support will be allocated according to need. Many of the actions are imprecise. The quality of success criteria for these priorities is uneven and not sufficiently focused on outcomes to provide a basis for monitoring.

### **Recommendations**

#### **In order to improve the monitoring and evaluation of the LEA's school improvement strategy:**

- develop more relevant, consistent and specific success criteria for EDP actions.

28. A clear and comprehensive approach to monitoring the EDP is set out within an annex of the EDP. Evaluation through joint officer, school and member groups is intended to provide not only monitoring of progress but also the development of improved school support strategies. However, the quality of monitoring and evaluation undertaken by these groups is inconsistent. While there is evidence of detailed consideration of progress in relation to literacy and numeracy, reports to members and the annual report provides insufficient critical evaluation to enable progress and the success or otherwise of actions to be ascertained. For example, in the latest annual report of the chief inspector, the progress of the schools receiving intensive support for literacy at Key Stage 2 is reported but the fact that the rate of progress is no greater than for other schools is not highlighted nor is any explanation offered.

## **Recommendations**

### **In order to improve the monitoring and evaluation of the LEA's school improvement strategy:**

- at least annually, provide a report to schools and members evaluating progress on each EDP activity providing, where necessary, an explanation for any slippage and setting out any remedial action.

29. In practice, while the priorities of the EDP have provided a strategic framework for school improvement, the actions and activities underpinning them are insufficiently precise. Officers have worked closely with schools to develop more coherent, targeted and relevant programmes of support than those set out in the EDP but these developments are only partially reflected in later versions of the EDP. Schools generally have a clear and accurate understanding of the rationale behind the programme of support set out in the annual school improvement programme (SIP). This support is aligned with EDP and national priorities and broadly reflects the differential needs of schools. Most of the key areas of support are effective, that for ICT particularly so. The LEA is currently working closely with schools on a revised EDP. This revision is identifying the weaknesses identified above, is being produced in partnership with schools and has the potential to a more comprehensive basis for school improvement in the future.

### **The allocation of resources to priorities and Best Value**

30. The allocation of resources to priorities is satisfactory with few areas of weakness. The council has prioritised education in the face of budgetary constraints. Although funding remains a little below SSA, schools have been largely protected from the reductions that have been required from other service areas. The additional costs of rising rolls, teachers pay and the LEA's contribution to the enlarged Standards Fund have been met in full. All budgets are carefully monitored. Directors have appropriate discretion to redirect any savings within their own service area and are expected to manage overspends within their total allocation. Medium-term financial planning commenced in 1998 but is not yet fully developed.

31. The very high level of delegation is effective in supporting school autonomy and sharpening the customer focus of traded services. Despite the complexity of the funding formula, the calculation of each school's allocation is very clearly presented and schools are satisfied with the rationale behind the formula and with the consultations on changes to the scheme. Schools were appropriately involved last year in the development of an activity-based model for school funding, although it was not implemented because of concern about changes to individual school budgets. Schools currently receive only limited support in writing bids for external grants.

32. Structures for the implementation of Best Value are unsatisfactory. Arrangements were disrupted by the reorganisation of the council, but are now being strengthened in response to a number of recommendations from the external auditor following a qualified audit of the council's first Best Value Performance Plan. External input into reviews has been increased in order to strengthen the challenge element of the process. Future reviews will be broader and more cross-cutting in

scope. Nevertheless, the second plan also received a qualified audit because mechanisms for the collection of data on service performance were judged to be insecure. Furthermore, while the council's performance management arrangements are improving they are underdeveloped.

33. At the time of the inspection, a Best Value review of traded services had been completed. An evaluation of the review is attached as Appendix 2 of this report. A further five service-specific reviews were at various stages of completion – these are referred to in the relevant sections of the text.

34. The LEA has successfully raised headteachers' awareness of Best Value principles as a result of presentations and information from officers. The managers of council services for schools are also aware of governors' responsibilities and have, for example, improved the level of detail in their service specifications. No financial benchmarking is provided. The role of the existing school funding review group of headteachers has appropriately been extended to provide an overview of Best Value work. A primary headteacher effectively led the traded services review.

35. Havering is one of 11 LEAs to have secured Department for Education and Skills (DfES) funding for a New Models for Service Delivery pilot project. The project has created the North Romford School Improvement Consortium comprising two secondary schools and most of their feeder primaries. One element of the project is the development of a joint purchasing capability to complement and, if successful, largely replace the LEA's brokerage arrangements. It is too early to evaluate the impact of the project.

## **Recommendations**

### **In order to improve support for the implementation of Best Value:**

- establish reliable mechanisms for the collection and analysis of data on service performance across the council.

## **SECTION 2: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

### **Implications of other functions**

36. The LEA's long standing commitment to education and supporting schools is reflected in the effort it has made to protect schools from budget cuts that have affected almost all other areas of council activity. The restructuring and refocusing of council planning and processes over the past three years have invigorated already effective partnerships with external agencies to support school improvement as well as strengthening service leadership.

37. The LEA provides schools with very good support for pupils with special educational needs and those with behavioural problems. Support for schools on attendance and for the education of pupils of ethnic minority heritage is satisfactory. Highly satisfactory support is provided for financial and human resources management. While currently support for children in public care and for schools in combating racism are unsatisfactory, both areas are improving. In 90 per cent of the schools visited both the sufficiency and effectiveness of overall LEA support was judged to be satisfactory or better.

### **Monitoring, challenge, support, intervention**

38. The LEA's procedures for monitoring, challenge, support and intervention are unsatisfactory overall, although they are improving.

39. Monitoring by the LEA is suitably differentiated, and, while it ensures that the LEA has reasonably accurate, up-to-date and improving knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of most schools, the level of rigour is inconsistent. The LEA's annual review process involves a programme of termly link inspector visits to schools accompanied by a structured analysis of attainment and performance data. These visits are well planned with written reports being provided to the headteacher but currently not to the chair of governors. Headteachers generally value the link inspector's contribution to school improvement and the increasing rigour of the monitoring process. There was clear evidence of appropriate differentiation. Successful schools receive a 'light touch' with a reduction in the time allocated for monitoring from three to a one and a half a days per annum. However, link inspectors' evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of school management is insufficiently rigorous. In the visits made to schools during this inspection there was evidence of inconsistency in the application of criteria by link inspectors and in a small number of schools a reluctance to identify weaknesses in management.

40. All schools are placed into one of four categories as a result of the annual review process. Category four includes schools subject to a formal warning; those judged by OFSTED inspectors to have serious weaknesses or to require special measures, and those designated by the DfES as facing challenging circumstances. Schools within category three are designated to require priority support and schools are placed into this category using published criteria relating to outcomes, quality of provision and leadership and management. Support and intervention are allocated differentially to schools within categories three and four in line with action plans drawn up jointly by the head and link inspector. Schools in category two are

designated not to have any cause for concern with those in category one requiring only a light touch. The support provided to schools in category one and two is restricted to the minimum required to meet LEA core responsibilities such as commitments to national initiatives and facilitating sharing of best practice. These schools have to purchase any additional support. However, they continue to have access to a limited range of LEA courses free of charge.

41. The LEA's strategy for identifying schools causing concern is not clear. The criteria and detailed descriptions, when used to identify schools requiring high-priority support, are satisfactory. They are less satisfactory when applied to schools requiring priority support, where many of the schools with relatively minor problems were not aware they had been so designated. Although intervention is effective the lack of clarity and candour shown by the LEA about their concerns leads to confusion about the role of the LEA in supporting school improvement. This, however, is being addressed.

### **Recommendations**

**In order to improve the way the LEA fulfils the functions of monitoring, challenge, support and intervention:**

- agree with schools clear criteria for identifying the full range of schools causing concern, and ensure that schools identified as causing concern are made aware of their weaknesses and the support that will be available to remedy them.

42. The level of challenge provided by the LEA during the target-setting process was too variable to be satisfactory. Targets agreed with the lower attaining schools were generally demanding. However, the targets for higher-attaining schools were in some cases not sufficiently demanding, and the challenge to these by the link inspector was inconsistent. Data provided by the LEA and national bodies is sufficiently well developed to allow schools to predict what pupils will achieve at the end of each key stage but some schools take too little account of the impact of support.

### **Recommendations**

**In order to improve the way the LEA fulfils the functions of monitoring, challenge, support and intervention:**

- ensure all schools set challenging targets for attainment.

43. The LEA is contributing to improved self-evaluation in schools, particularly those schools identified as cause for concern. In most schools self-evaluation is already, or close to being, embedded. The LEA provides services in a way that encourages self-evaluation. For example, effectively using the literacy and numeracy support to embed the principles of pupil assessment and monitoring. However self-evaluation has yet to be properly exploited by the LEA as a means to focus challenge and support. Arrangements to disseminate good practice through conferences and link inspector visits are satisfactory and improving. While there is increasing evidence of the LEA securing outside consultants to support schools, there has been too little focus on brokering services.

## **Recommendations**

**In order to improve the way the LEA fulfils the functions of monitoring, challenge, support and intervention:**

- reconfigure services to provide more choice for schools over the source of support.

44. At the request of the then DfEE, in order to assist its intervention in another LEA, Havering's then head of learning and achievement was seconded elsewhere in early 2000. In the course of this secondment the departure became permanent. The current head of learning and achievement has only been in post since January 2001, yet in the short time since his arrival he has already gained the confidence of schools and is involving them in an overhaul of the LEA's policy and strategy for school improvement. A set of draft policies and procedures has already set out the basis for a more rigorous, challenging and robust approach to monitoring, challenging, intervening and supporting schools. A Best Value review programmed for autumn 2001 is intended to address the reconfiguration for the service as a broker in the context of increased delegation to schools.

45. The capacity of Havering inspection and advisory service (HIAS) has been built up steadily and effectively over the past four years and is of an appropriate size and expertise. The 30.5 full-time equivalent professional staff have been largely drawn from headship or curriculum leadership in schools and have phase and specialist expertise. Generally, effective induction training and staff development programmes have ensured that officers are kept up-to-date with initiatives at a national and a local level. Non-core curricular areas are covered by consultants or by secondments from schools. However, the capacity to support secondary school management is limited. Workplans are used to ensure the satisfactory deployment and monitoring of staff. A local system of performance appraisal is being strengthened by the recent introduction of the council's performance development and performance appraisal (PDPA). The service is well prepared to meet the challenge of the forthcoming Best Value review. The cost per pupil of school improvement is relatively low and both the effectiveness and the value for money of these functions are satisfactory.

## **Collection and analysis of data**

46. Support to schools for the use of performance data is satisfactory, with few weaknesses. The LEA has developed its collation, analysis and circulation of data on pupil performance well. A balanced and comprehensive range of data, from early years to the end of Key Stage 4 is available, including some comparisons, for benchmarking purposes, with schools in other London boroughs. Prior attainment of pupils is available at entry level for all schools. Analyses of performance data are made available to schools annually in a manageable form. Data are collated on the performance of specific groups based on gender, and ethnic origin. There are effective systems to transfer data, via the LEA, between schools, when pupils transfer.

47. Link inspectors use the data to inform their meetings with schools to discuss targets. Primary schools find the data provided more useful than secondary schools do, because secondary schools generally collate additional data on their pupils.

48. The LEA has contributed to schools' capability in analysing data by providing OFSTED accredited training in school self-evaluation. This was attended by almost all the borough's headteachers. However there has not been an assessment of the impact and penetration of the training, for example how it will be disseminated to other staff.

49. Major themes that emerge from data are communicated to elected members, but detailed synopses are not provided. The LEA does not share data directly with governors, but the data goes to schools annually.

### **Support for literacy**

50. Support for raising standards of literacy has improved and is satisfactory overall. Support to schools has been stronger in primary than in secondary, in keeping with the emphasis of the national strategy. However, in Key Stage 3 the recent launch of the national strategy has been well received and in Key Stage 4, results in English remain above the national average, following a steep rise in 1999.

51. While the schedule of activities outlined in the EDP does not fully reflect the work of the team, it provides the broad remit within which support is provided. The literacy plan is clear, well structured and has been developed in consultation with schools. It has provided a sound basis for the implementation of the national literacy strategy and for providing targeted support to schools. There has been progress on implementing the family literacy activity. Small-scale projects supported by Single Regeneration Budget funding have been undertaken with eight schools.

52. Thorough analysis of performance data and OFSTED reports ensures that the right schools, in almost all cases, are identified for intensive support. This involves regular visits to support management and teaching, and often involves school-based training for the whole staff. This provides regular well-focused advice for headteachers; co-ordinators and other staff, arising from detailed reports on lesson observations and children's work. Staff feel well supported and value the opportunity to observe good practice in other schools. Schools report that support is having a positive impact on pupils' work. Many schools feel that recent in-service training from an outside expert in using a phonics-based approach has opened up a valuable way forward. In a few cases, including two schools visited, the crucial test of whether the schools will be able to manage autonomously has not been rigorously applied. The LEA has not withdrawn and transferred support as soon as it should have done. To date, the performance of schools in receipt of intensive support has only increased at the same rate as for all schools. However, the rate of improvement for these schools accelerated in the second year of support (1999/2000) and all of these schools visited during the course of this inspection were making good progress.

53. The 2000 results at Key Stage 2 are four per cent below target, leaving an eight per cent gap to be closed to reach the 2002 target of 86 per cent at Level 4 or



above. There is also a significant gap between the LEA target and schools' aggregated targets. Nevertheless, the LEA's literacy team is determined to meet the LEA target.

### **Recommendations**

#### **In order to achieve better progress towards achieving its targets for literacy:**

- ensure schools' targets aggregate to match the LEA targets; and
- accelerate progress towards LEA targets, particularly by raising standards at a more rapid rate in schools selected for intensive support.

54. The LEA clearly communicates information about funding, costs and entitlement to schools and administers standards funding well. Operational planning is effective and all schools have had good access to well regarded training. LEA guidance is helpful, such as a booklet adapting DfES audit materials about Key Stage 3 for Key Stages 1 and 2. LEA support groups are well attended. Access to expert teachers to disseminate good practice is well organised.

### **Support for numeracy**

55. Support to schools for raising the standards of numeracy is highly satisfactory with few weaknesses. Standards are above the national average in all key stages. However, there is a significant gap to close by 2002 to meet the challenge of achieving 82 per cent achieving Level 4 and above at Key Stage 2. Progress within the group of schools identified for intensive support has been faster than for other LEA schools but in a significant minority of these schools there has been a decline in performance.

56. Support by the LEA's numeracy team is well planned and well directed at specific schools and groups of schools. Training is of high quality and in schools receiving intensive support has focused on planning and objective setting. Attendance at off-site training has been followed up in school. Learning support assistants from schools have been offered training to enable them to make a more effective contribution to the improvement of standards. Intervention in schools where standards are unsatisfactory has been effective.

57. Practical strategies for the effective teaching of mathematics have been disseminated efficiently for Key Stages 1 and 2. There are good networks and support groups for primary schools that do not receive intensive support. There has been a lack of capacity to provide support to secondary schools. However, evidence from school visits indicates that support for numeracy in the secondary phase is inconsistent.

### **Recommendation**

#### **In order to further improve standards of numeracy in secondary schools:**

- improve targeted support for secondary schools.

## **Support for information and communication technology**

58. Support to schools for information and technology (ICT) is good. There is a clear vision and strategy. Arrangements are clearly communicated and well understood by schools. OFSTED inspectors judged progress in information technology as broadly in line with national averages at all key stages. Good progress is being made towards achieving the National Grid for Learning targets. Skills training arranged under the auspices of the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) is accessible, well organised and highly rated by teachers. Some 95 per cent of schools have enrolled for training and 80 per cent are working directly with the LEA as the endorsed training body.

59. Grants available to schools have been administered well for both primary and secondary schools. The LEA has monitored schools' ICT action plans and useful feedback has been provided; all but ten schools have submitted plans. There is strong support for the LEA's initiative in arranging discount purchasing of recommended essential equipment, although schools remain free to exercise independent choice if they so wish. The NOF newsletter, published on the LEA's web site is regularly accessed by at least nine other authorities as a useful summary of ICT developments.

60. Support for ICT co-ordinators is very good. There are regular meetings and good guidance and advice. There is willingness on the part of the LEA to work with schools, to understand problems and to collaborate in finding solutions. While there is a commitment to develop ICT as an integral learning tool within the curriculum, progress has been slow. This is because of the limited capacity of the LEA. Not all the subject groups at primary and secondary level identified for support have been formed.

### **Recommendations**

#### **In order to develop the contribution that ICT can make to pupils' learning:**

- focus more on working with subject leaders to promote ICT as a learning tool in the curriculum.

## **Support for schools causing concern**

61. Support for schools causing concern is satisfactory and improving. The proportion of schools identified by OFSTED as requiring significant improvement is below the national average. Currently, there are no schools in special measures, three schools with serious weaknesses and no schools judged to be underachieving. Three secondary schools are categorised as facing challenging circumstances because of their relatively low proportion of higher grade passes at GCSE for the last two years. Almost all of the schools causing most concern are making progress in raising standards. The numbers of schools in all categories of cause for concern are falling.

62. Schools formerly in special measures and those currently with serious weaknesses receive high levels of support that is proportional to need. This support is well planned and is co-ordinated through a careful monitoring of the post-

inspection action plan alongside the LEA's statement of action. The mechanisms for reporting progress to senior officers are clear. For schools in special measures, structures have been in place to report progress directly to elected members, although these arrangements are not currently required. For those schools with serious weaknesses, the responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness of support is clear and the processes of evaluation and support are kept suitably distinct and distanced. Evaluation is usually carried out half-termly. The schools' monitoring group has a role to oversee progress and receive reports from other departments working with the school.

63. For the 34 schools requiring some level of priority support, there are clear plans to bring about improvement and the eradication of weaknesses within one year: intervention is rapid and closely related to needs. The LEA also has clear plans of support for the few schools judged to require urgent priority support. Plans are costed carefully and targets are quantified in terms of pupils' attainment and progress. However, the means by which support is evaluated are imprecise and, until recently, the main strategies have been too reliant on the schools' evaluation or informal evaluation of the link inspector. Insufficient interim progress targets are set for these schools to help the school and the LEA measure rates of progress in the short term.

### **Recommendations**

#### **In order to improve the support for schools causing concern:**

- improve the methods by which the effectiveness of support given to schools causing concern is evaluated.

64. The recently developed school improvement strategy, incorporating revised procedures for supporting schools causing concern, shows a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of existing practice. Changes followed a period of detailed consultation with schools. Schools understand the new procedures, which reflect an increased emphasis on self-evaluation, a commitment to sharpening the criteria by which schools are identified as causing concern, and a more co-ordinated approach to providing support and managing intervention. Schools are increasingly involved in evaluating the effectiveness of the support provided.

### **Support for school management**

65. Support for school management is satisfactory, although there are weaknesses. The mutually positive approach to partnership by headteachers and the LEA is a particular strength. Support in primary schools and schools causing concern is effective and is leading to improvement. However, support for middle managers in both phases is unsatisfactory and support for senior management in secondary schools has had little impact.

66. Supporting school management and leadership, particularly in secondary schools, is a priority in the EDP. Support for primary schools has been very effective and OFSTED inspection evidence indicates that the quality of management and efficiency in these schools are high and rising. In secondary schools support has yet to make a significant impact, although it has been effective in schools with serious

weaknesses. OFSTED reports indicate that the rate of improvement in management and efficiency in secondary schools is less than expected. In both phases support and challenge has been most effective in schools identified as a cause for concern.

67. Support from the link inspector is valued by headteachers of primary schools. However, notes of visit produced as a result of these meetings are too descriptive and often do not yield a crisp analysis of management needs. Evidence from the school survey and school visits indicates that link inspector support for management in secondary schools is, with some justification, not so highly regarded by headteachers. The LEA has actively promoted school self-evaluation, based on the OFSTED model, and almost all head teachers have attended training. Almost all headteachers interviewed during this inspection valued the training and were implementing the process in their schools. However, the systematic exploitation of self-evaluation by link inspectors as a means of diagnosing the strengths and weaknesses in school leadership and management has yet to begin.

68. There are sound arrangements to support the induction of new headteachers, including mentoring and peer support from experienced headteachers and support meetings for acting headteachers who will take up their temporary posts next term. Participation in national leadership training is actively encouraged. The LEA hosts an annual conference for headteachers, holds termly meetings for headteachers with both the chief education officer and the head of learning and achievement and convenes a termly meeting for deputy headteachers. A draft paper outlining a borough-wide approach to being 'partners in leadership' is scheduled for discussion at headteacher meetings.

69. Support for middle managers is unsatisfactory. OFSTED inspection reports indicate middle management is a weakness but the LEA has not developed a coherent strategy to improve it. However, there are some strengths for example, in the literacy and numeracy strategies, which is largely focused on primary schools, and in support for special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs). In addition, the LEA is committed to partnership with its Beacon secondary school to develop better training for middle managers.

## **Recommendations**

### **In order to improve support for management:**

- better target support at senior and middle managers in secondary schools.

70. Support for the quality of teaching is effectively provided through a wide-ranging and well-regarded programme of professional development. LEA networks for subject leaders and special educational needs co-ordinators are effective in disseminating good practice. There has been effective work to develop staff in schools identified as causing concern.

71. The recruitment and retention of teachers is a growing concern. Recruitment and induction arrangements for newly qualified teachers are good. Links with schools on this matter are strong. Schools and the LEA have pooled resources to appoint a manager and have agreed and supported a number of other initiatives for the recruitment and retention of teachers in the borough.

## Support for governors

72. Support for governors is unsatisfactory; weaknesses outweigh strengths. While the information and advice provided by the LEA is highly regarded, too little is done to support governors in their strategic role in school management.

73. There is a strong base of organisational and administrative support for governing bodies, including clerking services. The school survey indicates that the governing body support unit is a highly valued service whose efficiency is appreciated. The service is effective in alerting governing bodies to developments arising from legislation. Induction training for governors and to governing bodies is well organised. However, there are some weaknesses in recruitment arrangements, in particular recruitment of governors of ethnic minority heritage from the local community.

### Recommendations

#### In order to improve support for governors:

- devise strategies to increase representation of ethnic minorities and the local community on governing bodies.

74. The LEA offers a broad range of governor training. However, there is often a low level of response to courses, arising some governors claim, from variable quality in previous experiences. Bespoke training is available to whole governing bodies but it is not effectively promoted.

75. Overall, the extent to which governors receive support to develop their role in school improvement is unsatisfactory, although assistance to those schools identified as having weaknesses is better. Training is not available for governors to help them critically assess school management and performance. Governors are too dependent upon the headteacher for information about the outcome of monitoring visits by Havering inspection and advisory service. However, sound support is provided to governing bodies in appointing headteachers.

### Recommendations

#### In order to improve support for governors:

- provide specific training for governors in their role of monitoring school improvement.

76. The consultation of governors on LEA policy is unsatisfactory. Since council structures were modernised governors do not have as much access to elected members, as was formerly the case. Nevertheless, current arrangements include the lead member's meetings with chairs of governing bodies, termly link-governor meetings and LEA's newsletters to governors. Chairs of governors are appropriately involved in the LEA's budget preparation process.

## **Recommendations**

### **In order to improve support for governors:**

- put in place systems that ensure that governors are effectively consulted in the formulation of LEA policies and practices.

## **Support for gifted and talented pupils**

77. Support for gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory and has a number of strengths. The LEA project for gifted and talented pupils has been running for two years and is valued by schools, pupils and parents and has attracted national interest. While it has prompted schools to respond better to the needs of gifted and talented pupils, the practices being developed in the project have yet to be embedded in school practice.

78. An increasing number of pupils (in excess of 3000) and schools are participating in the project. The project is also well supported by parents. Pupils attend Saturday morning sessions on a wide variety of topics. Those pupils supported by their school can join Saturday school classes of a higher age range if appropriate. Participation is followed up by a report to the school attended, with the intention of assisting the school to enhance learning. The project has raised awareness of the needs of gifted and talented pupils and schools' response to them.

79. Currently over 30 courses are available and funding is from payments by parents but those whose families are on income support get free access. As yet no in-service training has been offered to teachers but this has been identified as a next step. There is some monitoring of pupil and school participation by the LEA, including monitoring participation by children of minority ethnic heritage.

## **Recommendations**

### **In order to extend the support for gifted and talented pupils:**

- put in place a systematic programme of in-service training for teachers, which draws from the lessons learned from the activities run so far.

## **Support for early years**

80. Support for early years is good. Evidence from OFSTED inspections of primary schools shows that under-fives are provided with good teaching and make good progress. The quality of provision in nursery settings is good.

81. Havering has a well-established early years development and childcare partnership, which is well supported by the LEA and has strong links with teachers. The revised Early Years Development and Childcare Plan is sound and has recently been submitted to the DfES. The partnership has met its target to provide sufficient good quality free places for all four year-olds, and is continuing to plan to meet its target for three-year-olds. An early years adviser works closely with the partnership's principal development adviser. Support and training are well targeted and effective. Current priorities include introducing the foundation stage, improving

continuity between the pre-school stage and reception, and supporting individual schools and settings where OFSTED inspection reports have identified weaknesses. Regular meetings of an early years headteachers' representative group are held. Schools in the school survey regarded support for early years between satisfactory and good. Schools visited had received good support for the early years, including one that had had a weakness identified in this area.

## **SECTION 3: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT**

### **Corporate planning**

82. Despite being at a relatively early stage of implementation the strengths of the council's arrangements for corporate planning outweigh the weaknesses. The council's corporate plans are satisfactory and the vision for education is translated into coherent service strategies. The council is making rapid progress in developing performance management systems and embedding a business management culture.

83. The council is ambitious and farsighted and has identified a long-term vision for the role of the council as one of strategic leadership and community empowerment. Since modernisation in 1998, it has sought to complement its new officer and member structure with new systems of corporate and service planning. At a corporate level, it is intended that the council's aspirations, vision and values are to be translated into policy and strategy within four documents: a community strategy; the Best Value Performance Plan; the corporate development plan, and the community area plans.

84. Apart from the Best Value Performance Plan, these documents were at the time of the inspection still in draft. The draft community strategy contains the most complete expression of corporate strategic objectives. Raising educational standards appears as a commitment to encourage all children to achieve their full potential, in good schools that achieve high standards. These and the key action areas set out to support this commitment reflect the high priority accorded to education. The recently produced children and lifelong learning service cluster strategy 2001 to 2004 puts these corporate commitments into the context of a vision for the future of schools as self-improving organisations. It brings coherence to priorities in the EDP and other statutory plans relevant to education, and is beginning to be used effectively by officers and members for monitoring progress across the range of education functions.

85. Current service plans include all of the key service priorities, for example those relating to the EDP and the asset management plan. However, the quality is uneven and linkages to planning at section level are inconsistent. Nevertheless, detailed monthly monitoring reports enable heads of service and the executive director to monitor progress effectively. Quarterly peer reviews by other service heads provide challenge and support inter-service co-operation. While budgetary control processes are robust and provide a secure foundation for financial planning, there is only limited integration of financial and service planning. The council is well on the way to implementing comprehensive, new performance management processes together with a business management culture. These developments are clear, well thought through and pragmatic. The council's performance appraisal system is only partially implemented but there is a sound plan for it to be rolled out across the council over the next year.

86. The LEA's commitment to school autonomy and choice is reflected in a very high level of delegation and the enthusiastic support for schools seeking specialist school status.



87. Reports from officers to members are succinct; options are clearly set out and enable members to make informed decisions. Officers provide advice promptly to members and to the executive member and executive director in the case of delegated decisions. The LEA maintains an effective partnership with schools that ensures headteachers, trades unions and chairs of governors work closely with officers in budget preparation.

88. Despite weaknesses in scrutiny arrangements the leadership given by the council's members is, overall, satisfactory. There is a history of cross-party commitment to education and working with schools and members are prepared to take unpopular but appropriate decisions. The recent decision to consult on the closure of a primary school was firmly but sensitively handled by members. The learning and enterprise oversight and scrutiny committee does not receive regular and up-to-date information on the activity of schools and education services to enable them to monitor and critically evaluate performance. The council is in the process of reconfiguring its information systems and intends soon to provide members with comprehensive and timely monitoring information.

#### **Recommendations**

**In order to enable the learning and enterprise oversight and scrutiny committee to properly fulfil its role of holding schools and the education services of the LEA to account:**

- establish a comprehensive system of performance monitoring and reporting to committee members.

89. The quality of leadership given by senior officers is satisfactory and has some good features. Relationships with schools are sound and improving and the new management team is establishing, in consultation with schools, a more structured and transparent basis for co-ordinated service development. Officers' response to new initiatives is improving, as is support to schools in accessing external funding.

90. A commitment to building effective partnerships is reflected at all levels of council activity. Partners indicate that relationships with the council are good. Effective partnerships exist for the development of provision for the early years. There is good joint working with the health authority, for example, in the sure start partnership in Harold Hill. A successful community safety strategy is underpinned by a strong partnership between the police and the council. An important partnership has been created between futures careers guidance and the LEA at both strategic and operational level and at the strategic level there is collaborative work in place in preparation for the Connexions service from 2002. The LEA has good working relationships with the Catholic and Church of England dioceses and with other religious bodies. The standing advisory council for religious education (SACRE) works well.

91. There were examples in the schools visited of effective partnerships in support of child protection and pre-school and nursery education. However, the relationship between schools and the social services department, although beginning to improve, remains unsatisfactory. Over 80 per cent of schools in the school survey

rate liaison between education and social services less than satisfactory. This was confirmed by the visits made to schools during this inspection.

### **Management services**

92. Arrangements for purchasing council-run management services in 2001/02 are well co-ordinated and efficient. Adequate information about a comprehensive range of 33 services is conveniently contained in a single 'services for schools' brochure. Although few of the current traded services have benchmarked their costs against other LEAs, the LEA has information, which shows that fees are appropriate, and buy-back rates, already high in 2000/01, increased further in 2001/02. Most of the schools visited were discerning customers, market testing services before choosing providers. Schools wishing to approach external providers can purchase satisfactory client support. Headteachers were fully consulted on further delegations under Fair Funding.

93. The strategy for marketing services was subject to a formal Best Value review in 2000/02, the inspection of which is reported in Appendix 2. The outcome of the review is to support school autonomy by moving towards an 'honest broker' model under which external providers meeting basic quality standards will be included alongside or in place of council-run services in future editions of the brochure. A school funding review group will monitor standards and decide whether services should continue to be marketed through the brochure.

94. Support for **finance** is satisfactory with few weaknesses. The annual budget planning pack is a comprehensive guide to budget construction and is rightly valued by schools. The basic service provides telephone support, but most schools purchase additional time for on-site visits to assist budget preparation, monitoring and forecasting. Finance staff know schools well and work closely with the team providing support for schools' management information systems. The LEA is actively promoting school autonomy by encouraging all schools to hold chequebook accounts. This also avoids the shortcomings in the council's existing financial information system that does not allow on-line transactions. Schools receive helpful budget information well before the start of the financial year. Schools' financial projections and reconciliations are carefully monitored without taking budget management responsibility away from governors. While few schools have deficits, over 40 per cent of primary schools had significant surpluses. The LEA is taking appropriate action in respect of these schools. The internal audit service was rated the most effective of all LEAs in the school survey.

95. The **personnel** service has many strengths and is highly regarded by schools. Service specifications are clear with a good balance between basic and optional services. In common with a number of other traded services with high buy-back rates, it is not always clear what service schools would continue to receive from central budgets if they did not subscribe. However, the service is committed to ensuring that the LEA's minimum statutory responsibilities are met from central budgets. The service makes an effective contribution to the school improvement through management development training for headteachers and governors.

96. Support to schools on **buildings maintenance** and the management of projects is poor and over 50 per cent of schools in the survey rated all aspects of building work as poor or very poor. Building and technical services, together with the building maintenance service are corporate organisations, remote from schools and without the capacity to cope with the volume of projects generated by the increases in capital grants. The council has been slow to implement its own plans to involve the private sector in project development and management. However, a new manager was appointed following the reorganisation of the council, changes are beginning to be put in place, and there is reason for optimism that the situation will improve.

### **Recommendations**

#### **In order to improve support for property management in schools:**

- accelerate the involvement of the private sector to increase capacity and competence in property services.

Support for **ICT in school administration** is satisfactory. The SIMS software support is good. The team provides an efficient and expert service with a call logging system which is used to provide both management information for service improvement and to identify training needs in schools. A new corporate ICT strategy is currently being prepared but investment in ICT at the corporate level has not kept pace with changes in schools so there is little or no electronic transfer of data. Havering is part of the London Grid for Learning consortium, but broadband implementation and work on a central pupil database is only just beginning. Co-ordination between the corporate unit responsible for hardware support and those in Havering inspection and advisory service (HAIS), responsible for developing the National Grid for Learning, is effective.

97. Havering premises services provides a satisfactory **client support** and **contract monitoring** service. It also manages effective group contracts, some of which have been won by the in-house service, for cleaning, relief caretaking, grounds maintenance and catering. Schools visited reported that they felt under no pressure to use the council's premises services. Contracts are well managed and monitored, particularly the group contract for catering.

## SECTION 4: SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

### Strategy

98. The LEA strategy to support pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is sound and has good features; it has widespread support within all schools. The principles of inclusion are well embedded and the developing pattern of LEA service provision is consistent with the inclusion of pupils with increasingly complex needs in mainstream schools. A clear and concise SEN development plan generally sets out a coherent process for improving LEA provision. However, it lacks accompanying financial planning and the future role of special schools is insufficiently explicit.

99. The targets and priorities for SEN included in the EDP have focused LEA policy for SEN. Responsibility is delegated to the schools to ensure differentiation and for appropriate curriculum planning for all abilities, especially at Key Stage 4. The development plan targets are included in individual service plans and are also monitored each half term by the SEN review group. The lack of service level projections and associated financial implications are weaknesses. However, given the relatively stable demand for services, the financial plans included in annual service estimates are sufficient to confirm the feasibility of SEN service developments.

### Recommendations

**In order to strengthen the strategic planning for SEN, convert the SEN development plan into a comprehensive strategy by:**

- including projected service levels and financial implications within the development plan; and
- making explicit the future role of special schools.

100. The development of inclusive education is well advanced and has been an LEA priority over the past ten years. The authority has worked with the schools to build the skills of teachers and support assistants, thus ensuring that the majority of pupils with special educational needs can be appropriately placed in their local school. The three special schools cater for the most educationally vulnerable pupils, including about ten per cent from adjoining boroughs. Parents' views are sought and where possible, placements are made in line with their choice.

101. Increasing delegation, reviewing the funding formula for SEN and improving the clarity and fairness of resource allocations to schools for pupils with SEN are key current themes within the SEN development plan. Mainstream schools are already responsible for appointing staff to support statemented pupils. The LEA has begun delegating a proportion of its SEN budget to schools in this academic year, allowing a greater degree of flexibility and choice in the purchasing of services. Consultation with schools was extensive and evidence from school visits indicates schools were well prepared to manage delegated budgets.

102. The range of support services provides well for children with visual, hearing and physical impairment and there is a small service for pupils with autistic spectrum

disorder; this service will receive additional staffing as required. The authority has reduced the number of pupils placed in boarding schools outside the borough. A recent initiative to improve provision for Year 10 and 11 pupils with challenging behaviour has been effective in reducing the demand for out borough placements.

103. Special schools now cater for pupils with an increasing range and severity of needs. The planned fixed-term placement of pupils with a re-entry date to mainstream school is innovative. However, there is little evidence of the LEA taking a proactive role in using the expertise available in special schools to support inclusion in mainstream schools.

### **Statutory obligations**

104. The LEA is very effectively meeting its statutory obligations. One hundred per cent of statements are issued within the set timescale without exception.

105. The LEA has strengthened the links with parents through the appointment of a parent partnership officer. Training has been provided for named independent parental supporters who now respond to requests for help and advice. Information for parents is good. Parental preferences are taken into account when places are allocated for the children. There have been very few occasions when the tribunal for SEN has been involved. Pre-school children with special needs are supported by the portage service, at an opportunity nursery or at the assessment nursery of the special school. There is a good range of provision that allows for early intervention.

106. The quality of statements is satisfactory with contributions from parents and specialists used as the basis for the recommendations. All are subject to a thorough and detailed annual review that leads to appropriate changes in the level and nature of provision. Transitional reviews are carried out in a timely manner. Training is of good quality and guidance is clear, relevant and up to date.

### **School improvement and value for money**

107. The LEA exercises its various SEN functions to support school improvement very well. It provides very good support to schools, which is well matched to their needs. Services are well monitored; control of SEN budgets is effective. With overall spending on SEN relatively low, the LEA provides very good value for money.

108. All the services involved with SEN and inclusion have been brought together under one manager. As a result, there is improved communication and co-ordination across these services and links with other services across the council have been strengthened. Effective systems are used to assess school needs and target resources and support. A range of service level agreements and criteria for allocation of resources ensure that schools are clear about their entitlement.

109. Support from the LEA is well regarded by the schools and HIAS provides a range of courses to support inclusion. The special needs support service allocates time to schools, which are banded into three groups according to need.

110. The professional development of special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) is good. The training of learning support assistants has facilitated skilled support for pupils with SEN in mainstream schools. The educational psychology service is well regarded and works to a wide brief that includes the assessment of pupils, provision of in-service training, research projects and the preparation of statements. The principal educational psychologist works closely and effectively with the inspector for SEN and the SEN administrative officer.

111. A range of systems has been developed to monitor achievement. Good use is made of this data when setting school targets for the next year and for use in discussion with headteachers over such things as individual education plans (IEPs). The IEPs are used effectively to monitor progression within schools with each IEP focusing on small step targeting. The educational psychologists diligently monitor all IEPs at Stage 5 and there is termly monitoring of each child who is on the Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH) programme. Staff from the TEACCH programme identify schools which need additional help and then work with the schools to set clear targets for delivery to individual children.

112. The level of funding for SEN is carefully monitored and accurate data is maintained to allow for predictions on emerging trends.

## **SECTION 5: ACCESS**

### **The supply of school places**

113. The LEA's planning of school places is highly satisfactory. The school organisation plan has been reviewed following appropriate consultation. The plan is clear and concise; particularly the policy statement on inclusion and the criteria for the amalgamation of linked infant and junior schools. Diocesan representatives report that they feel adequately consulted. The methodology for forecasting rolls has proved very accurate and well within Audit Commission guidelines.

114. The proportion of unfilled places in primary schools is close to the national average although somewhat above the average for other London boroughs. Action is in hand which will return the overall surplus of primary places to below ten per cent and halve the number of schools with more than 25 per cent spare capacity from eight to four. Further sustained action and some difficult decisions will be required to ensure that the removal of surplus places keeps pace with the decline in primary rolls. The actual capacity of secondary schools is just sufficient to meet current demand. A basic need case has been accepted by the DfES for additional forms of entry at two secondary schools to meet growing demand until rolls peak in 2004. The infant class size plan has been implemented efficiently. All infant children will be in classes of below 31 by next September without recourse to temporary accommodation.

115. Asset management is improving and the processes are now satisfactory. An asset management plan (AMP) development group comprising officers, property professionals and representative headteachers acts as a critical friend to the LEA. The DfES has commended the LEA's arrangements for consulting local partners and determining priorities. Officers have worked well with schools on jointly funded projects to address previous under-investment in the school building stock. Schools are now well-informed about AMP issues and can see where each project lies in the list of overall priorities. The LEA's condition data, which pre-dated AMP requirements, have been satisfactorily updated and used by the DfES to allocate New Deal for Schools funds in 2001/02. Some headteachers would have welcomed more guidance in completing the self-assessment questionnaires for the suitability survey.

### **Admissions**

116. Admission arrangements are highly satisfactory. The admissions team provides a parent-focused service and a well co-ordinated system which effectively optimises the number of parental preferences that can be met at secondary transfer. The admissions forum meets regularly and takes an appropriately broad view of its responsibilities including, for example, commenting on the school organisation plan and the presentation of the admissions booklets for parents.

117. The admissions booklets are well presented, but with scope for further improvement in the information about previous levels of over-subscription and timing of appeals. Information is not presented in community languages. Officers helpfully attend open evenings and provide surgeries for parents at schools that are likely to

be oversubscribed. The number of appeals has increased as spare capacity in the secondary sector has reduced. Appeal arrangements are well managed.

### **Education otherwise than at school**

118. Provision for pupils who do not have a school place is sound, with some good features. There is a good range of provision including three pupil referral units (PRUs), a project for pupils at Key Stage 4, and home and hospital tuition.

119. Two PRUs cater for pupils in Key Stages 1 to 3 who have been excluded or, more commonly, are at risk of exclusion. Both PRUs have been inspected by OFSTED and judged, overall, to provide satisfactory education. However, the 1999 report on the Key Stage 3 PRU identified poor accommodation and insufficient planning, monitoring and support of the curriculum as issues. Improvements were set in train at once and have been completed in the last year. The emphasis in the PRUs is teaching pupils to manage their own behaviour so that successful reintegration may occur. Of five excluded pupils placed in the Key Stage 3 PRU in 2000/2001, three have been reintegrated into a mainstream school. However, this PRU, unlike the primary PRU, does not provide a reintegration programme for the pupils.

120. The opening opportunities project provides a full-time educational programme for pupils at Key Stage 4, catering for those at risk of exclusion and those who have been excluded. This was free standing but appropriately has now been registered with the DfES as an annex of the Key Stage 3 PRU. Prior to registration, an external evaluation of provision had taken place. In 1999/2000, 24 out of the 35 pupils involved progressed to work, training or further education college.

121. All permanently excluded pupils receive either 15 or 25 hours of provision. The time delay in placing excluded pupils has been reduced; most are now placed within four weeks. However, some pupils who are at risk of exclusion may have to wait longer. The LEA is already close to providing full-time education within 15 days of exclusion. It has plans for fully meeting this requirement, which are about to be discussed with headteachers as they include making use of in-school learning units.

122. The Havering tuition service provides tuition for pupils with long-term sickness, pregnant schoolgirls and for pupils with emotional difficulties such as school phobia. Provision has been markedly improved over the last two years, with a move from limited individual tuition to 12 hours of group tuition by trained tutors, with extra support provided for the pupils at home. Individual tuition is still provided where necessary. The tuition centre has recently been registered as a PRU. Two-thirds of the 92 pupils catered for last year went back into school or on to other provision, which is an improvement on previous years. The home tuition service provides support for pupils on reintegration. Pupils' progress is now reviewed more rigorously and virtually all the Year 11 pupils in 2000/01 were entered for GCSE examinations.

123. Tuition in hospital is provided quickly to those pupils who need it, which is a strength of the service. Hospitalised pupils are now able to keep in contact with their school friends by email, which is helping to ease their reintegration back into school.



There are satisfactory arrangements for monitoring the education provided by parents who choose to educate their children at home. Planned improvements to the service include offering more support to the parents.

124. Services concerned with home and hospital tuition and monitoring home educators have been the subject of a recent Best Value review that made useful recommendations that are likely to lead to improvement. These included better provision of information to stakeholders, increasing the hours provided, and improving monitoring records. However it was not specific about monitoring the quality and impact of the services provided. It was also limited in its scope, as it did not cover provision for all pupils who are out of school. Nevertheless, the provision for all pupils who are out of school is reviewed regularly. The inclusions officer manages this process, although the tracking does not include an overview of the attainment of the pupils.

### **Support for behaviour**

125. Support for behaviour is very good and offers good value for money. The rate of permanent exclusions in 1999/2000 was below the national average for primary schools and average for secondary schools. This represents a significant reduction from 62 permanent exclusions in 1997/98 to 37 in 1999/2000. OFSTED inspections show that with respect to ethos, a higher percentage of both primary and secondary schools are judged to be very good or good compared the average nationally. Furthermore, those secondary schools inspected twice have improved considerably since their first inspection.

126. The revised behaviour support plan is in many respects good, setting out clearly the responsibilities of schools and the LEA, and the services provided. The plan makes clear the LEA's commitment to supporting pupils with behaviour difficulties in mainstream schools. The aim is, wherever possible, to help prevent pupils being excluded from school. To this end, an inclusions panel was created in November 2000, which comprises headteacher representatives together with LEA officers. The panel considers referrals for planned moves of pupils, and determines appropriate provision for those pupils who have been excluded. It has worked very successfully so far, and is a major reason for the reduction in permanent exclusions. All secondary headteachers have co-operated with the work of the panel, and all but three have accepted a child so far. The work of the inclusions officer has been vital to the success of the panel. As well as planned moves to other schools, pupils at risk of exclusion can be placed in one of the pupil referral units or, at Key Stage 4, in the Opening Opportunities Project. There are also several schemes whereby disaffected older pupils can, for example, attend college one day a week for vocational courses or have access to a mentor.

127. Support provided to schools by the behaviour support service in conjunction with the education psychology service is very good and is enhancing the schools' capacity to manage behaviour and maintaining pupils in schools. Support includes advice to staff on the development of strategies and behaviour management, advice and support for parents, training on behaviour management programmes for teaching and non-teaching staff as well as support and counselling for individual pupils. This provision is available to schools on a buy-back basis. Schools rate the

service highly, often citing the excellence of their assigned support teacher. Schools in need receive effective support, for example, one school had received support in establishing a nurture unit attached to reception, and another school, which had had a serious behaviour problem, had received intensive and effective support.

128. Schools' use of the pupil retention grant is monitored, mainly through the work of the inclusions panel.

### **Support for attendance**

129. Support for attendance is sound although there are inconsistencies in support for secondary schools. In 1999/2000, overall attendance rates were in line with national averages in primary and secondary schools. The 1999/2000 figures for unauthorised absence were close to, but did not quite meet, the targets set in the EDP.

130. The revised behaviour support plan makes clear the role of the education welfare service (EWS) in supporting attendance. The EWS is currently taking part in a pilot scheme for the DfES whereby half the workforce is devolved into secondary schools. The rest of the service covers all primary and special schools.

131. The EWS is soundly managed. Support is targeted according to need. Those primary schools requiring most support receive one additional visit from an education welfare officer (EWO) every two weeks and more frequently, if necessary. Others do not have an allocated EWO but have access to the service via a duty system. This works reasonably well. Targeted schools have received good support. Pupils receive targeted home visits. Cases referred through the duty system by a school are dealt with by the same EWO. However, schools do not necessarily know who their allocated officer is, and the impact of support on the targeted schools has not been analysed in detail.

132. One EWO is allocated to a cluster of three secondary schools. The head of the youth service is in charge, in order to ensure the EWS is integrated into the preparation for the Connexions service, and liaises closely with the EWS manager. A recent report by an external consultant indicates that the devolved service is well established in most schools, although the clusters need some adjustment in order to give certain schools more support. Two schools visited reported that the EWO's increased contact with staff and pupils was having a positive impact. However, one school had inconsistent support and another school has had only irregular contact. Not all schools have a computerised registration system.

### **Recommendation**

#### **In order to improve support for attendance:**

- the impact of support given to the targeted schools should be analysed, and that analysis should be used to inform targeting in the future.

133. There is productive joint working with the police and with other agencies, for example, in conducting truancy sweeps and in the Havering venture summer project.

This project gives 40 young people, mainly from disadvantaged backgrounds, a fortnight of structured activities in the summer holidays.

134. A Best Value review of the EWS has just been presented to members. This reaches conclusions that are likely to help the service to make improvements. These include establishing a system for prioritising cases and sharing data on local attendance levels with relevant staff and agencies and setting local performance indicators. Costs per pupil are below the average for similar authorities and the service gives satisfactory value for money.

### **Health, safety, welfare and child protection**

135. Support for child protection is sound. The LEA provides clear guidelines, which have just been updated. There is regular training, which is well regarded by most schools visited. All designated child protection co-ordinators have been trained, and 68 per cent of schools have had basic training for all staff including classroom assistants. The LEA officer in charge has regular meetings with the social services child protection team and other agencies, and attends meetings of the multi-agency risk management panel. However, despite recent improvements in social services, many schools still find it too difficult to access support for vulnerable pupils. Schools in the school survey rated advice on child protection procedures between satisfactory and good.

#### **Recommendations**

##### **In order to improve support for child protection:**

- ensure that systems are put in place which to improve schools' access to social workers.

136. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for supporting health and safety in schools. A performance group meets regularly allowing headteachers and trade union representatives to pursue concerns in partnership with the LEA. There is an appropriate range of guidance materials and training courses. The LEA concedes that it is stretched to provide as comprehensive a service as it would wish and schools will fund the appointment of an additional officer to provide improved on-site support and general advice.

### **Support for children in public care**

137. Significant improvements have been made in this area, although support is not yet satisfactory. Havering has 165 children in public care, of whom 43 are placed in 24 Havering schools. In 1999/2000, pupils in public care attained below the borough average in Key Stages 1 and 2, and well below at GCSE. Targets for improvement have been set.

138. The local authority, in the revised behaviour support plan, recognises the need to improve the educational experiences of children in public care. There is a recent policy written jointly by staff in education and children's services. It sets out the role of the corporate parent including objectives and targets for the educational achievement and support of the children. Since autumn 2000, there has been a

sound database, and regular exchanges with social services, so that the LEA now knows where all its children in public care are being educated. Schools were asked in May 2001 to appoint designated teachers, and these are to be trained in the second half of the summer term. Personal education plans for each child are due to be put in place in the autumn term.

139. The council has a scrutiny panel of elected members and officers, which considers attainment data for children in public care, and also randomly selected individual cases. This is a positive move. Social services have now appointed a team manager for children in public care, and links between education and social services are in place. Management of the area within education is in transition. The LEA is well aware of what needs to be done, and its capacity to improve support in this area is good.

### **Support for minority ethnic children**

140. Support for minority ethnic children is satisfactory; strengths outweigh weaknesses. Overall numbers in schools are small. The LEA's data are incomplete, but show that most minority ethnic groups perform above the borough average. Recently the borough has started to receive children who are asylum seekers.

141. The LEA collects data on the achievement of pupils from minority ethnic groups and plans to collect data over the summer on the 900 plus children currently unclassified by ethnicity. Minority ethnic groups are too small for statistical trends in achievement to be secure; therefore targets are not set. The Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Grant (EMTAG) action plan 2001/02 lists a range of appropriate actions, but these are very general. The grant is not delegated to schools as the total allocation of funds falls below the sum that triggers delegation.

142. The English as an additional language (EAL) service provides good support to help pupils improve their fluency in English. It has clear procedures for allocating teaching support to schools, and is flexible in providing schools who have just received asylum seekers with immediate support. The progress of pupils supported by the service is tracked and short-term targets are set. The service also provides resource packs and guidance for community languages and support for pupils to take examinations. A project in secondary schools, which aims to increase schools' capacity to manage EAL provision for their pupils has had some impact. The service has run a ten-week long training course for teachers which staff from seven schools have attended. There are good links with the literacy team.

143. The recently formed Traveller education support service, although small, provides good support. Clear and appropriate targets are set and support is well regarded by schools. The Traveller and EAL services are not under the same line management, which is a disadvantage. However, both lead officers belong to an ethnic minority steering group, which aids co-ordination. Unauthorised Traveller encampments are being moved on often before the Traveller education support service has visited. Although the council exercises its duty to establish whether there are members of the community who are vulnerable or in need of education, liaison between this section of the council and the Traveller education support service is not strongly enough developed.

## **Recommendations**

### **In order to improve support for ethnic minority achievement:**

- links between the EAL service and the Traveller education support service should be strengthened; and
- liaison between those council officers with responsibility for Travellers and the Traveller education support service should be strengthened.

144. Whilst schools in the school survey regarded support for meeting the needs of pupils for ethnic minorities as just below satisfactory, schools visited had a more positive view of the EAL and Traveller service and often praised the quality of support.

### **The effectiveness of measures taken to combat racism**

145. Although the effectiveness of measures to combat racism is improving, the provision and impact of the measures taken are unsatisfactory. The LEA has developed procedures to help raise awareness of racism. There are links between council departments and external agencies, although these are patchy. There is also a recently constituted race equality council, which is a positive move, but this is not routinely consulted on all major education plans and policies. An education action plan, is part of the council's managing diversity report, and identifies suitable actions but has weak success criteria which make it difficult to measure the impact of the planned actions. There is an acknowledgement of the need to link the actions to gains in pupils' attainment and progress. Despite these weaknesses, the plan represents a purposeful response to the recommendations of the report of the inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence, The Macpherson Report.

146. Actions of the LEA have begun to raise awareness of the importance of race in schools. However, initiatives are at early stages of development and have not yet had a significant impact on most schools. These include the production of useful curriculum materials, influencing the training and induction programmes for newly qualified teachers, and promoting training for headteachers and teachers. There has been an encouraging increase in the number of schools participating in training programmes and governors from two schools attended a visual arts presentation by children at the schools that dealt with issues of racism. Actions to disseminate successful practice through a website are behind schedule, because of staffing difficulties.

147. Equality of opportunity policies in schools have not been monitored and this is a planned development for the next academic year. Link inspectors are receiving suitable briefings on the LEA's strategy. There is a commitment, through the action plan, to work with governing bodies on matters of race, although governing bodies have not been prepared systematically or sufficiently for this task. Members of minority ethnic groups are under-represented on governing bodies. Mechanisms exist for gathering and analysing reported racist incidents. These are followed up, as are the nil returns and the non-returns. There was a good rate of response last year,

although actions resulting from the analysis have not been systematic. Schools are aware of the LEA's work in supporting strategies to combat racism but there has not been enough discussion with schools and governors about what support they need to combat racism effectively.

### **Recommendations**

#### **In order to improve the effectiveness of measures to combat racism:**

- discussions should be held with headteachers and chairs of governors to identify the support they feel they need to combat racism in school effectively; this should then be provided to all schools in an agreed rolling programme.

### **Social exclusion**

148. The LEA is strongly committed to social inclusion, which has been promoted for many years. The policy on inclusion is clearly set out within the SEN policy, the behaviour support plan and the action plan produced in response to the report of the inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence. In many ways the LEA is, in practice, strongly inclusive. Pupils with SEN are well supported within mainstream schools. Few pupils are permanently excluded from school; the work of the recently constituted inclusions panel has been successful in ensuring this, and the LEA provides very good support to schools in managing pupils with behavioural difficulties. Improvements have been made in the provision for those relatively few pupils who are permanently excluded from school and for others at risk of social exclusion, such as school phobics.

149. A large number of individual projects, often multi-agency, aim to counter social exclusion. These include the Sure Start project, which is targeted at two particularly deprived wards, the healthy schools initiative, the very recent provision of mental health workers, and the Havering motivations project, aimed at disaffected teenagers.

150. The areas which are still weak, although improvements have been made recently, are operational liaison between schools and social workers, support for pupils in public care and measures to combat racism.

## **APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **SECTION 1: THE LEA STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

**In order to improve the monitoring and evaluation of the LEA's school improvement strategy:**

- develop more relevant, consistent and specific success criteria for EDP actions; and
- at least annually, provide a report to schools and members evaluating progress on each EDP activity providing, where necessary, an explanation for any slippage and setting out any remedial action.

**In order to improve support for the implementation of Best Value:**

- establish reliable mechanisms for the collection and analysis of data on service performance across the council.

### **SECTION 2: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

**In order to improve the way the LEA fulfils the functions of monitoring, challenge, support and intervention:**

- agree with schools clear criteria for identifying schools causing concern and ensure that schools identified as causing concern are made aware of their weaknesses and the support that will be available to remedy them;
- ensure all schools set challenging targets for attainment; and
- reconfigure services to provide more choice for schools over the source of support.

**In order to achieve better progress towards achieving its targets for literacy:**

- ensure schools' targets aggregate to match the LEA targets; and
- accelerate progress towards LEA targets, particularly by raising standards at a more rapid rate in schools selected for intensive support.

**In order to further improve standards of numeracy in secondary schools:**

- improve targeted support for secondary schools.

**In order to develop the contribution that ICT can make to pupils' learning:**

- focus more on working with subject leaders to promote ICT as a learning tool in the curriculum.

**In order to improve the support for schools causing concern:**

- improve the methods by which the effectiveness of support given to schools causing concern is evaluated.

**In order to improve support for management:**

- better target support at senior and middle managers in secondary schools.

**In order to improve support for governors:**

- devise strategies to increase representation of ethnic minorities and the local community on governing bodies;
- provide specific training for governors in their role of monitoring school improvement; and
- put in place systems that ensure that governors are effectively consulted in the formulation of LEA policies and practices.

**In order to extend the support for gifted and talented pupils:**

- put in place a systematic programme of in-service training for teachers, which draws from the lessons learned from the activities run so far.

**SECTION 3: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT**

**In order to enable the learning and enterprise oversight and scrutiny committee to properly fulfil its role of holding schools and the education services of the LEA to account:**

- establish a comprehensive system of performance monitoring and reporting to committee members.

**In order to improve support for property management in schools:**

- accelerate the involvement of the private sector to increase capacity and competence in property services.

**SECTION 4: SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

**In order to strengthen the strategic planning for SEN, convert the SEN development plan into a comprehensive strategy by:**

- including projected service levels and financial implications within the development plan; and
- making explicit the future role of special schools.



## **SECTION 5: ACCESS**

### **In order to improve support for attendance:**

- the impact of support given to the targeted schools should be analysed and that analysis should be used to inform targeting in the future.

### **In order to improve support for child protection:**

- ensure that systems are put in place which to improve schools' access to social workers.

### **In order to improve support for minority ethnic achievement:**

- links between the EAL service and the Traveller education support service should be strengthened; and
- liaison between those council officers with responsibility for Travellers and the Traveller education support service should be strengthened.

### **In order to improve the effectiveness of measures to combat racism:**

- discussions should be held with headteachers and chairs of governors to identify the support they feel they need to combat racism in school effectively; this should then be provided to all schools in an agreed rolling programme.

## **APPENDIX 2: BEST VALUE REVIEW OF TRADED SERVICES**

1. The arrangements for purchasing council-run management services are well co-ordinated and easy for school to access. The way services are currently marketed is satisfactory and will probably continue to improve, albeit slowly.
2. The review examines the LEA's strategy for marketing traded services to Havering schools. It specifically excludes an evaluation of individual services, each of which will be subject to review as part of the corporate Best Value programme. The review focuses on the information to be provided to schools in future, but also addresses quality standards, user satisfaction, and the development of a market for external providers. Although the review report makes passing reference to the LEA's participation in the DfES 'Models for New Service Delivery' pilot project, and to the council's vision for a 'retail front end', the links and implications are not made explicit. The scope of the review, therefore, is somewhat narrow. It does not, for example consider how support services are provided for the LEA itself nor, indeed, for the whole council.
3. An immediate outcome of the review has been to improve the presentation of the 'Services for Schools' marketing brochure. There are now some generic service standards and a code of conduct for service providers. Compliance with these standards will be a condition for future inclusion in the brochure. A user group will monitor standards and co-ordinate customer surveys so that schools are not over-burdened with questionnaires from individual services. In the longer term, the review makes explicit the role of the LEA as an 'honest broker'. There are targets for the progressive inclusion of external providers in the brochure, and for the introduction of on-line ordering. At the time of the inspection, the changes had made little impact on users.
4. Following the council's standard approach an officer who is not responsible for the service, in this case a primary school headteacher, led the review. The challenge element was strongly influenced by the early views of schools, the majority of which favoured development of existing arrangements rather than any more radical approach. The report concludes with a section describing five more radical approaches to service delivery which, had they been more fully exposed and researched at the initial challenge stage, would have given the review the strategic focus which it set out to achieve. Information about outsourcing, for example, was not included in the consultation paper and it appears that facilities management companies were not invited to discuss possibilities.
5. Contacts were established with a number of other LEAs in order to compare practice elsewhere. Whilst this was helpful in refining the 'honest broker' model which finally emerged, it appears that possible joint arrangements with other LEAs were not discussed. Consultation with headteachers and governors was adequate although limited in terms of the options presented. The views of users have clearly been taken into account in the changes that are being made.
6. The approach to competition centred on whether external providers should be allowed to market services through the brochure. Implicit throughout the review was the view that this should only happen when council-run services had insufficient

capacity or were failing to deliver to the required standard. These conditions appear to run counter to one of the stated aims of the LEA, which is to become more proactive in developing the market. Even allowing for schools' understandable wish for stability, the target of having 30 per cent of alternative providers listed in the brochure by 2005 looks unambitious.

7. The arrangements for purchasing council-run management services are sound. The Best Value review will lead to improvements for schools as users, but not to a step change in performance.

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